

OTHER BOOKS BY DONN BIRVE

A DAUGHTER OF THE MEDICI

AN ALLEY OF FLASHING SPEARS

THE ISLAND OF YOUTH

BLIND FAITHFUL

BROUGHT SAIL

FIELD OF HONOR

HANGMAN'S HOUSE

O VALLEY OF SHANGANACH

A PARTY OF BACCARAT

RIVERS OF DAMASCUS

STORIES WITHOUT WOMEN

THE WIND BLOWETH

A WOMAN OF THE SHEE

MESSER MARCO POLO

BY
DONN BYRNE



PENGUIN BOOKS INC NEW YORK

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FIRST PENGUIN BOOKS EDITION OCTOBER 1946

Penguin Books Inc. 245 Fifth Avenue New York 16
Penguin Books Limited Harmondsworth Middlesex En
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AME

MESSEUR MARCO POLO

THE MESSAGE CAME TO ME AT THE SECOND
heck of the hunt that a countryman and a
clansman needed me. The ground was heavy
as dry raw and it was a drag too fast for
fun and too tame for sport. So I blessed the
countryman and the clansman and turned
my back on the field.

But when they told me his name I all but
fell from the saddle.

But that man's dead!

But he wasn't dead. He was in New York.
He was traveling from the crags of Ulster to
his grandson who had an orange grove on the
Indian River in Florida. He wasn't dead.
And I said to myself with impatience: Must
every man born ninety years ago be dead?

But this is a damned thing. I thought
to be saddled with a man over ninety years
old. To have to act as *garde malade* at my age!
Why couldn't he have strayed and died at
home? Sure one of these days he will die as
we all die and the ghost of him will never be
content on the sluggish river by the mossy
trees where the blue herons and the white

cranes and the great gray pelicans fly It will be going back I know to the booming surf and the red berried rowan trees and the barking eagles of Antrim To die out of Ulster when one can die in Ulster there is a gey foolish thing

But the harsh logic of Ulster left me and the soft mood of Ulster came on me as I remembered him and I going into the town on the train And the late winter grass of Westchester spire scrofulous the jerry built bungalows the lines of unconely linen and blatant advertising boards—all the use of it passed away and I was again in the Antrim glens There was the soft purple the Irish Channel and there the soft outline of Scotland There was the heather school silver in the sun and I could see it from the crags where the surf boomed like a cannon And underfoot was the heather the heather the belled and purple heather

And there came to me again the vision the old man's thatched farmhouse when the moon was up and the bats were out and the winds of the County Antrim came belly down the glens The turf fire burning on the hearth now red now yellow and there was the golden light of lamps and Mahe

of the Long Glen was reciting some poem of
Blind Kisterys or the lament of Pierre Ron
sard for Mary Queen of Scots

*Ta ribin o mo cheadsl eare ann mo pl oca sios
Ahas mna Eirp na leigleusdaus iio bhron
fara ir
Ta me iuidh leat go ndeantar damh comhra caol'
Aes hol hfaisth an seir no thuailh an thrid mo
lar ann s*

There is a ribl on from my only love in my pocket
deep
And the women of Europe they could not cure my
grief at is!
I am done with you until a narrow coffin be made
for me
And until the grass shall grow after that up through
my heart

And I suddenly discovered on the rum
bling train that apart from the hurling and
the foot ball and the jumping of horses what
life I remembered of Ulster was bound up in
Malachi Campbell of the Long Glen

A very strange old man hardy as a black
thorn immense bowed shoulders the face of
some old hawk of the mountains hair white
and plentiful as some old cardinal's All his
kinsfolk were dead except for one grand
daughter And he had become a tradi

tion in the glens It was said he had been an ecclesiastical student abroad in Valladolid and that he had forsaken that life And in France he had been a tutor in the family of MacMahon *roi d'Irlande* and somewhere he had married and his wife had died and left him money and he had come back to Antrim He had been in the Papal Zouaves and fought also in the American Civil War A strange figure who knew Greek and Latin as well as most professors and who had never forgotten his Gaelic

Antrim will ever color my own writing My Fifth Avenue will have something in of the heather glen My people will have always a phrase a thought a flash of Scotch Irish mysticism and for that I must thank or blame Malachi Campbell of Long Glen The stories I heard and I young were not of Little Rollo and Sir Walter Scott's but the horrible tale of the Naked Hangman who goes through the Valleys or Midsummer's Eve of Dermot and Cranyon the Bright Breasts of the Cattle Raid of Maeve Queen of Connacht of the old of Cuchulain in the Island of Skye grisly homely stories such as yon of the

foot ballers of Cushendun whose ball is a skull and whose goal is the portals of a ruined graveyard strange religious poems like the Dialogue of Death and the Sinner

Do thu ann listin do rich deoraulh treeth lag—
I ued to giv lodging to every poor wanderer
Food and drink to him I would see in want
His proper praym ut to the man requesting rock
Omh
Och! Is not Jesus hard if he condemns me!

All these stories of all these people he told had the unreal shimmering quality of the mirage that is seen from Portrush cliffs a glittering city in a golden desert surrounded by a strange sea mist All these songs all these words he spoke were native had the same ring as the turf smoke the Gaelic quality that is in dark lakes on mountains summits in plovers nests amid the heather And to remember them now in New York to see him

Fifteen years had changed him but little a little more tremor and slowness in the walk a bow to the great shoulders an eye that flashed like a knife

And what do you think of New York
March

tion in the glens It was said he had been an ecclesiastical student abroad in Valladolid and that he had forsaken that life And in France he had been a tutor in the family of MacMahon *roi d'Irlande* and somewhere he had married and his wife had died and left him money and he had come back to Antrim He had been in the Papal Zouaves and fought also in the American Civil War A strange old figure who knew Greek and Latin as well as most professors and who had never forgotten his Gaelic

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foot ballers of Cushendun whose ball is a skull and whose goal is the portals of a ruined graveyard strange religious poems like the Dialogue of Death and the Sinner

Do dhugainn lóistín do fácht deoraidh treith lab—
 I used to be a lodger to every poor wanderer
 Food and drink to him I would see in want
 His jocular I went to the man requesting reck-
 on
 Och I not Jesus hard if he condemns me!

All these stories of all these people he told had the unrefined shimmering quality of that mirage that is seen from Portrush cliffs a glittering city in a golden desert surrounded by a strange sea mist All these songs all these words he spoke were native had the same ring as the turf smoke the Gaelic quality that is in dark lakes on mountains summits in plovers nests amid the heather And to remember them now in New York to see him

Fifteen years had changed him but little a little more tremor and slowness in the walk a bow to the great shoulders an eye that flashed like a knife

And what do you think of New York
 Malachi

I was here before your honor will remember I fought at the Wilderness

I forbore asking him what change he had found I saw his quivering nostrils

In a few days he would proceed south when he had orientated himself after the days of shipboard

That night it seemed every one chose to come in and cluster around the fire Randall the poet and the two blond Danish girls with their hair like flax Fraser the golfer just over from Pietruk and a young writer with his spurs yet to win and this one and that one

They all kept silence as old Malichi spoke sportsmen artists men and women of the world a hush came on them and their eyes showed they were not before the crackling fire in the long room but amazed in the Antrim glens

Yes old Malichi said things were changed over there and a greater change was nigh

- People whispered that in the Valley of the Black Pig the Boar without Bristles had been seen at the close of the day and Templemore there was a bleeding and these were ominous portents
folks believed and some didn't

So

A

the great Irish hunter that had won the Grand National the greatest horse in the world

But our Man of War Malchi?

Oh sure all he could do was run and a hare or a greyhound could beat him at that but Shawn Spadah a great jumper him as well as a runner in fine a horse And did

I know that Red Simon McEwer of Cushindall had gone around Portrush in eighteen consecutive fours? A Rathlin Islander

had tried to swim across to Scotland but didn't make it and there was great arguing as to whether it was because of the currents or of lack of strength There were rum

blings in the Giants Causeway very strange A woman in Oran had the sec

ond sight the most powerful gift of second sight in generations There was a new

piper in Islay and it was said he was a second McCrimmon And a new poet had

arisen in Uist and all over the Highlands they were reciting his songs and his Lament for the Bruce Was I still as keen for

did I still remember the poems and the great stories?

Behold the night is of great length I quoted Unbearable Tell us therefore of those wondrous deeds

I was here before your honor will remember
I fought it the Wilderness

I forbore asking him what change he had
found I saw his quivering nostrils

In a few days he would proceed south
when he had orientated himself after the days
of shipboard

That night it seemed every one chose to
come in and cluster around the fire Randall
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over there and a greater change was liable

People whispered that in the Valley of
the Black Pig the Boar without Bristles had
been seen at the close of the day and in
Templemore there was a bleeding image
and these were ominous portents Some
folks believed and some didn't And

Did you ever see a scholar standing in front of a ship of a guild? In all his learning he can find nothing to say to her And every penny part in the country knows

Let you be listening now Brian Oge and let all the scholars be listening But whether the scholars do or not I'm not caring A pope once listened to me with great respect and a marshall of France and poets without number But the scholars do be turning up their noses And mind you I've got as much scholarship as the next man as you'll see from this

Barring myself is there no creature here but takes snuff? Vol Ah you would be changing

Now it's NEARING NIGHT ON THE FIRST DAY
 of spring and you could see how loath day
 was to be going for even the short time until
 the rising of the sun again And though there
 was a chill on the canals yet there was great
 color to the sunset the red of it on the water
 ebbing into orange and then to purple and
 losing itself in the olive pools near the
 mooring ties And a little wind came up from
 the Greek islands and now surged and flut-
 tered the way you'd think a harper might be
 playing You'd hear no sound but the mel-
 ody was there It was the rhythm of spring
 that the old people recognize

But the young people would know it was
 spring too by token of the gaiety that was in
 the air For nothing brings joy to the heart
 like the coming of spring The folk who do
 be blind all the rest of the year their eyes
 do open then and a sunset takes them and
 the wee virgin flowers coming up between
 the stones or the twitter of a bird upon the
 bough And young women do be preen-
 ing themselves and young men do be singing

even they that have the voices of rooks. There is something stirring in them that is stirring in the ground with the bursting of the seeds.

And young Marco Polo threw down the quill in the counting house where he was learning his trade. The night was coming on. He was only a strip of a lad and to lads the night is not rest from work and the quietness of sleeping but gaming and drinking and courting young women. Now there were two women he might have gone to and one was a great Venetian lady with hair the red of a queen's cloak and a great noble shape to her and great dignity. But with her he would only be reciting verses or making grand stilted compliments the like of those you would hear in a play. And while that seemed to fit in with winter and candlelight it was poor sport for spring. The other one was a black plump little gown maker a pleasant singing little woman very affectionate and very proud to have one of the great Polos loving her. She was eager for kissing and always asking the lad to be careful of himself to be putting his cloak on or to be sure and drink something warm when he got home that night for the air from the canals was

chill The great lady was too much of the mind and the little gown maker was too much of the body either of them to be pleasing young Marco on the first night of spring

Now it is a queer thing will be pleasing a young man on the first night of spring The wandering foot itches and the mind and body are keen to follow There is that inside a young man that makes the hunting dog rise from the hearth on a moonlight night Be gor! it's myself I'll take a turn through the fields on the chance of a bit of coursing A wiesel maybe or an otter would I out the night Or a hare itself Ay there would be sport for you! The hare running hell for leather and me after him over brake and dell Ay! Ay! Ay! a good hunt's a jewel! I'll take a stretch along the road

Or there is in him what does be troubling the birds and they on tropic islands Tweet tweet they grumble A grand place this surely and very comfortable for the winter The palm trees are green but I'd rather have the green of young grass And the sea you ken it becomes monotonous Do you remember the perches of Champagne wine and the cherry trees of Antrim? Do you remembe

the farmer who was such a bad shot and his wife with the red petticoat! I'm feeling fine and strong in the wings *avournen* What do you say? Let's bundle and go!

He wandered out with the discontent of the season on him. The sun had dropped at last and everywhere you'd see torches and the image of torches in the water. On the canals of the town great barges moved. Every where were fine noble shadows and the splashing of oars. There was a great admiral's galley ready to put to sea against Genoa. There a big merchantman back from Africa. And along the canals went all the people in the world you'd think. Now it was a Frenchman all silks and satins and *la-di-da monsieur*! Or a Spaniard with a pointed beard and long lean legs and a long lean sword. And now it was a Creek courtesan white as milk sitting in her gondola as on a throne. Here was a Muscovite hairy dirty with fine fur and fine jewels and teeth sharp as a dog's. And now an effeminate Greek nobleman languid as a bride. And here were Moorish captains *Othello's* men great giants of black marble and swarthy hook-nosed merchants of Palestine and the squires of Crusaders—pretty ringleted boys swearing like demons

And here and there were Scots and Irish mercenaries kilted sensitive folk one moment smiling at you and the next a knife in your gizzard

And as he went through the courts there were whispers and laughter and occasionally a soft voice invited him to enter but he smiled and shook his head

Near the Canal de Mestre which is close by the Ghetto he stopped by the wine shop called The Prince of Bulgaria and he could hear great disputation And some were speaking of Baldwin II and how he had no gut to have let Palæologus take Constantin from him And others were murmuring at Genoa Mark us they mean trouble the dogs Better wipe them off the face of the earth now And a group were discussing the chances of raiding the Jewish Kingdom of Yemen They've got temples there rooked with gold And an Irish piper playing on a little silver set of pipes and Indian magician was doing great sleight hand

I'll go in and talk to the strange folk people said Marco Polo

II

NOW YOU MIGHT BE THINKING THAT THE picture I'm drawing is out of my own head. Let you not be thinking of it as it is now a city of shadows and ghosts with a few scant visitors mooning in the canals. The Pride of the West she was the Jewel of the East. Constantinople was her courtyard. Greece, Egypt, Abyssinia, Bulgaria and Muscovy her ten 100 fields. The Crusaders on their way to fight the Saracen stopped to plead for her help and generosity. There were no soldiers more chivalrous, not even the French. There were no better fighters, not even the Highland clans. Sailors! You'd think those fellows had invented the sea. And as for riches and treasures, oh! the wonder of the world she was! Tribute she had from everywhere: the four great horses of Saint Mark they came from Constantinople. The two great marble columns facing the Piazza, sure they came from Acre. When foreign powers wanted the loan of money, it was to Venice they came. Consider the probity of Venetian men. They once held as pledge the Crown of Thorns.

itself King Louis IX of France redeemed it

The processions of the tradespeople were like a king's retinue and they marching in state on the election of a doge. Each in their separate order they'd come the master smiths first as is right every one garlanded like a conqueror with their banner and their buglers. The furrriers next in ermine and tiffeta the tanners with silver cups filled with wine the tilters in white with vermillion stars the woolworkers with olive branches the quilt makers in cloaks trimmed with fleur de lis the cloth of gold weavers with golden crowns set with pearls the shoe makers in fine silk while the silk workers were in fustian the cheese dealers and pork butchers in scarlet and purple the fish mongers and poulterers armed like men of war the glass makers with elegant specimens of their art the comb makers with little birds in cages the barber surgeons on horseback very dignified very learned and with it you'd think there'd be an end to them but cast your eye back on that procession you'd find guilds as far as your sight would reach.

Let you be going down the markets - what would you see for sale? Boots cloth

bread. No they were out of sight but scattered on the booths the like of larks of bread on a fair day you'd find cloves and nutmegs, rice and ebony from Moluccas that had come by way of Alexandria and the Syrian ports, sandalwood from Sumor in Asia, camphor from Borneo, Sumatra and Java sent benzoin to her markets. Cochun China sent bitter aloë wood from China and Japan and from Sumatra, cane gum, spices, silks, chessmen and curiosities for the parlor, rubies from Peru, fine cloths from Coromandel and finer still from Bengal. They got spikenard from Nepal and Bhutan. Their diamonds were from Ceylon. From Nimul they purchased Damascus steel for their swords. Nor is that all you'd see and you'd be going down by the markets on a sunny morning and a fine thinking how varied woman on your trip. You'd see pearls and sapphires, topaz and cinnamon from Ceylon, lac and agates, brocades and coral from Cambay, hammered vessels and inlaid weapons and embroidered shawls from Cashmere. As for spices, never would your nostrils meet such an odor, bdellium from Scinde, musk from Tibet, galbanum from Khorasan, from Afghanistan, asafoetida from Persia, sagapenum, ambergris and civet from

Zanzibar and from Zanzibar came ivory too
 And from Zeila Berbery and Shebri came
 balsam and frankincense

And that was Venice and Marco Polo a
 young man And now it's only a town like any
 other town but for its churches and canals
 There's many a town has ghosts but none the
 ghosts that Venice has not home itself or
 Fara of the kings

Once did she hold Ransell quoted the gor-
 geous East in fee
 And was the safeguard of the West the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth
 Venice the eldest Child of Liberty
 She was a maiden city bright and free
 No guile seduced no force could violate
 And when she took unto herself a mate
 She must espouse the everlasting Seal

Time is the greatest rogue of all Not all
 the arrows of Attila can do the damage of a
 trickle of sand in an hour glass' Tyre and Si-
 don Carthage ancient Babylon and Venice
 queen of them all

I am describing Venice to you for this re-
 son You might now stand where Troy's walls
 once were and say to yourself Was
 where Helen walked with her little son? Was
 this where the loveliest face of ages wept?

And ■ chill of doubt would come on you and you would think I've been wasting my sorrow and wasting my love for it was all nothing but an old tale made up in a minstrel's head

And sometime in Venice after your dinner in ■ hotel you'd go out for a while in a *barca* that would have no more romance to it nor the bark a gillie would row and you sail on fishing on a cold blustery day and you would feel disappointed you having come so far and you'd say It was a grand story surely and bravely did it pass the winter evening but wasn't old Malichi of the Long Glen the lay of the world?

I wouldn't have you saying that and I don't In all I'm telling you I'd have you to know there's not a haporth of lie

III

AND SO MARCO LOLO WENT INTO THE WINE shop to see and hear the strange foreign people

It was a dark long room very high full of shadows between the flaming torches on the wall. At one side of it was a great fire burning for all it was the first night of spring. At one end of it were the great barrels of liquor for the thirsty customers—black beer for the English and the Irish—grand hairy stuff with great foam to it—and brown beer for the Germans—and there was white wine there for the French people—and red wine for the Italians—asquebaugh for the Scots—and rum from the *Indes* for such as had cold in their bones. There was all kind of drink there in the brass bound barrels—drink would make you mad at drink would make you merry drink would put heart in a timid man and drink would make fighting men peaceful as pigeons—drink that would make you forget trouble—in the brass bound barrels at the end of room. And pleasant fat little men were going round serving the varied liquor in

silver cups and fine Venetian glasses for the wine and in broad bellied drinking pots that would hold more than a quart

And there was such a babel of language as was never heard but in one place before

Some of the drinkers were dicing and shouting as they won and grumbling and cursing when they lost And some were singing And some were dancing to the Irish pipes And there was a knot around the Indian conjurer

But there was one man by himself at a table And him being so silent you'd think he was shouting for attention He was so restful against the great commotion you'd know he was a great man You might turn your back on him and you'd know he was there though he never even whispered nor put out a finger A fat pleasant close coupled man he was in loose green clothes with gold brocade on them And there were two big gold ear rings in his lobes He smoked a wee pipe with the bowl half ways up it The pipe was silver and all stem and the bowl no bigger than a ten cent piece His shoulders were very powerful so you'd know he was a man you should be polite to and out of that chest of his a great shout could come He might have been a workman only when he fingered his pipe

Everybody in the room was white and shaken—all but the sea captain. He just tamps his pipe as if nothing had happened and smokes on. He doesn't even take a drink from his glass.

And a little while later an Irish chieftain walks in. He's poor and ragged and very thin. You might know he'd been fighting the heathen for the Holy Sepulchre and so entitled to respect no matter what his condition. And behind him are five chinsmen as ragged as he. But a big German trooper rolls up.

And what are you? says the big burly fellow.

A gentleman, I hope, says the ragged chief.

Is yourself that says it? laughs the German trooper. The chieftain snicks the knife from his armpit and sucks him in the jugular as neat as he damned.

You of take that out, Kevin Beg—the Irish points to the killed man—and thro' someone might stumble

is conceive roused a room. They were murmers and 'ng and a

guing the rights and wrongs of the matter All but the sea captain who saw it all and he never blinked an eyelid never even missed a draw of the pipe

And then Marco Lolo knew him to be a Chinaman because as all the world knows Chinamen are never surprised at anything

IV

SO MARCO LOLO GOES OVER AND SALUTES HIM politely

I wonder if you mind my sitting down by you for a while he says I perceive you re from China

The sea captain waves him politely to his place

I m from China He smiles You guessed right

Is it long since you ve been in China?

Well that depends upon what you call long says the captain If you mean time it s one thing If you mean voyage it s another For you ve got to take into account says he adverse winds roundabout turns to avoid currents possible delays to have the ship scraped free from the parasite life that does be attaching itself to the strakes time spent in barter and trade Other matters too the tricks of pirates crossgrained princes who don t want you to be leaving their ports with a good cargo in your hold sickness loss of sails and masts repairs to the ship It wasn t a short journey and it wasn t a long one

It will be a long ways to China I m think
ing

I can tell you how long it is from China to
here and you can reverse that and you will
get a fair idea of how long it is from here to
China I left Zentoan with a cargo of porcelain
for Japan and traded it for gold dust and
from Japan I went to Chimba to lay in a store
of chessmen and pen cases And from Chimba
I sailed to Java which is the greatest island in
the world Java is fifteen hundred miles from
Chimba south and southeast and it took me
four months sailing but a sea captain cannot
pass Java by for it is the chiet place for black
pepper nutmegs spikenard galingale cu
bebs cloves and all the spices that grow

And I stopped at various small islands
from there until I came to Basma which is
the island of the unicorns And there we trade
in pygmies which ignorant people think are
human folk They are just wee monkey with
all the hair plucked out except the hair of the
beard There is great money in them

I stopped at Sumatra for coconuts and
toddy and just for witer at Dragoian Drago
ian is not a good city It is filled with sorcerers
who have tattooed faces At Lambri I put in

for the sago you buy from the hairy men with tufts

Son never stop at the isle of Andaman The men there have faces like dogs They are a cruel generation and eat every one they can catch I could tell you a story but I would not spoil this fine spring night Go rather to the island of Ceylon and see the King's Ruby which is the greatest jewel in the world I stopped there and at Coromandel for the pearls the divers go down in the sea for and there are no clothes on that island so that every one goes naked as a fish And there is the shrine of Saint Thomas I was there

Gujarat Tana I stopped there The Male and Female Islands I put into for ambergris Suetra which is full of magicians—I was there too Madagascar and Zanzibar where they live on camel flesh I was there And from Zanzibar I came north to Abyssinia because I had to get an ostrich there for the King of Siam And there was a letter and a parcel for the Sultan of Egypt So I went to Cairo I had a month on my hands so I thought I'd over and see Venice because it's a hobby of mine you might say to see the world

Now let me reckon Four and three makes seven and four more are eleven and six

seventeen and let us say nine with that and you have twenty six And the month I'm forgetting on the rocks of Aden is twenty seven and a week here and a week there for bad winds and such like It would be safe to put that at three months So it's two years and a half since I left China

You never says young Marco met any body in China by the name of Polo

Poh lo Poh lo China's a bigger place nor you would imagine laddie There's half a hundred million people there

These were foreigners Marco explained traders They were at the court of the Great Khan

Polo Polo? Well now I think I've heard of them Was one of them a big red bearded man with a great eye for a horse and a great eye for a woman?

That would be my Uncle Matthew

For God's sake! And was the other a cold dark man a good judge of jewel and a grand judge of a sword?

My father Nicholas Polo

For God's sake! you're the son of one and the nephew of the other!

Did you know them?

Ah laddie how would I be knowing peo-

for the sigo you buy from the hairy men with tails

Don never stop at the isle of Andamar The men there have faces like dogs They are a cruel generation and eat every one they can catch I could tell you a story but I would not spoil this fine spring night Go rather to the island of Ceylon and see the king's Ruby which is the greatest jewel in the world I stopped there and at Coromandel for the pearls the divers go down in the sea for and there are no clothes on that island so that every one goes naked as a fish And there is the shrine of Saint Thomas I was there

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Now let me reckon Four and three makes seven and four more are eleven and six are

A cold and beautiful princess . . . says Marco Polo

She ■ not a cold and beautiful princess
says the sea captain . . . She is warm as the sun
in early June and she may be beautiful and
a princess but we all think of her as Golden
Bells the little girl in the Chinese garden

Did you ever see her? says Marco eagerly
Tell me

I saw her before I left . . . says the sea captain . . .
I was at the Khan's palace of Chagan
nor . . . says he . . . seeing of the chief of the stewards
was there anything I could get for him
and I in foreign parts . . . And as I was being
rowed back along the river by my ten brawny
sailors . . . what did I pass but the garden of
Golden Bells

And there she was by the river side a little
brown slip of a girl in green coat and trousers
with a flower in her dark hair

And I lower my head in reverence as we
pass by . . . But I hear her low merry voice by
reason of which they call her Golden Bells

Ho . . . master of the vessel . . . she calls
Where do you go?

And the sailors back water with a swish
and I stand up respectfully . . . for all she is only
a slip of a girl

I go to foreign parts Golden Bells I tell her to far and dangerous places into the Indian Ocean To the Island of Unicorns and to the land where men eat men

I hope you come back safe master of the vessel she says I hope you have a good voyage and come back safe It must be a dreadful strain on your people to think of you so far away

In all this wide land I tell her there is none to worry about me I have neither chick nor child

Golden Bells will worry about you then she said and you in the hazards of the sea And take this flower for luck And she gave me the flower from her hair And let it bring you luck against the anger of the ocean and the enemies all men have And let me know when you are back because I ll be worried about a man of China and him in danger on the open sea

And wasn t that a wonderful thing from a daughter of Kubla to me a poor sailor man?

The son of the King of Siam came to woo her with a hundred princes on a hundred elephants but she wouldn t have him I don t wish to be a queen she told her father How could I be a queen? I am only Golden Bells

Nor would she have anything to say to the Prince of the Land of Darkness who came to her with sea ivory and pale Arctic gold. The sun of China is in my heart and you wouldn't have me go up into the great coldness to shiver and die?

So she remains in her garden by the lake of Cranes with Li Po the great poet whom they call the Drinker of Wine to make songs for her and the *Sanang Tung Chih* the great magician to perform wonders for her when she is wearied and Bulagin her nurse to take her to her heart when she is sad.

And sad she is a lot of the time they tell me. She sits in her garden in the dusk playing her lute and singing the Song of the Willow Branches which is the saddest love song in the world.

And why she should be singing a sad love song is a mystery for her soft brown beauty is the flower of the world. For there would be no lack of suitors for her nor is she the one to refuse love. The only thing I make of it is that the right hour hasn't come.

The beauty of Venice jumps to your eyes but the beauty of this pulls at your heart. Little brown Golden Bells in her Chinese garden singing the song of the Willow

Branches at the close of day Is that not
better nor Venice?

But he got no word out of Marco Polo sit
ting with his chin cupped in his hands And
that was the finest answer at all at all

V

THE TIMES WENT BY AND MARCO LOLO BUSIED himself with his daily affairs keeping track of the galleasses with merchandise to strange far away ports buying presents for refractory governors who didn't care for foreign trade in their domains getting wisdom from the old clerks and knowledge from the mariners in the main acting as the son of a great house while the heads of it were away

You would think that he would have forgotten what the sea captain of China told him about Golden Bells what with work and sport and other women near him You would think that would drop out of his memory like an old rhyme But it stuck there as an old rhyme some times sticks and by dint of thinking he had her fast now in his mind—so fast so clear so full of life that she might be some one he had seen an hour ago or was going to see an hour from now He would think of the now merry now sad eyes of her and the soft sweet voice of her by reason of which they called her Golden Bells and the dusky little face and the hair like black silk and the splotch of the

red flower in it. She was as distinct to him as the five fingers on his hand. It wasn't only she was clear in his mind's eye, but she was inside of him, closer than his heart. She was there when the sun rose, so he would be saying, "It's a grand day is in it surely, Golden Bells." She was there in the dim counting house and he going over in the great intricate ledgers, the clerks do be posting carefully with quills of the gray goose, so that he would be saying,

I wonder where this is and that is. Sure I had my finger on it only a moment ago (Golden Bells). And when the dusk was falling and the bats came out and the quiet of Christ was over everything and the swallows flew low on the great canals, she would be beside him and never a word would he say to her, so near to him would she be.

And she wrought strangeness between him and the women he knew, the great grave lady with the large pale mouth, her that was of his mind, and the little black cloak maker with the eager red mouth, her that was closer than mind or heart to him. So that the first found fault with his poetry.

I don't know what's come over you, Marco Polo --and there was a touch of temper in

her voice — but these poems of yours show me you haven't your mind on your subject. Would you mind telling me when I had bound black hair? she says. And you say my bosom is like two little russet apples. Now a regular poet once compared it to two great silver cups and that was a good comparison though in truth she says he knew as little about it as you. And my hands are not like soft Eastern flowers. They're like lilies. I don't know where you do be getting these Eastern comparisons she says. But I don't like them. Tell me pretty boy — she looks suspicious — you haven't been taking any of the strange Egyptian drugs the dark people do be selling in the dun shops on the quiet canals? Look out pretty boy! Look out!

And the little cloak maker grumbled when he was gone. I don't know what's wrong with him she says. Or maybe it's something that's wrong with myself but this delicate love isn't all it's cracked up to be. It's all right in books she says and it's a grand sight and the players doing it but I like a hug she says would put the breath out of you and a kiss she says you could feel in the soles of your feet. And she lay awake and grum

bled Let him be taking his la di da courting to those as favor it says she It's not my kind and she grumbled through the lonely night I wonder where my husband is now she said And wasn't I the foolish girl to be sending him off! Sure he drank like a fish and beat me something cruel but he was a rare lover and the mood on him Sure a woman never knows when she's well off says she

And Marco Polo didn't miss them any more nor you'd miss an old overcoat and the winter past All his mind was on was the Golden Bells of China And he thought long until his uncle and father came so that he could be off with them to the strange Chinese land

But there's no use to me going there says he I couldn't marry her She would laugh at me he says She who refused the son of the King of Siam with his hundred princes on a hundred elephants what use would she have for me who's no better nor a peddler with his pack? But it would be worth walking the world barefoot for to see that little golden face to hear the low sweet voice they call Golden Bells

They came back in due time his uncle Matthew the red hairy man and his father

the thin dark man who knew precious stones
And he told them he wanted to go with them
when they made their next expedition to
China

We could be using you after your training in trade says the father But Marco Polo would take no interest in barter Sure you'd better come along says his uncle Matthew

There's great sport to be had on the road kissing and courting the foreign women and not a word of language between you barring a smile and a laugh

I have no interest in the foreign women
Uncle Matthew

Then it's the horses you've been hearing about the fine Arab horses faster nor the wind and the little Persian ponies they do be playing polo on and the grand Tatar hunters that can jump the height of a man and they sure footed as a goat Ah the horses the bonny horses!

Ah sure Uncle Matthew it is little I know of horses Sure I know all about boats racing and trade and war boats but a horse is not kin to me

Then what the hell's the use of your going to China?

Ah sure that's the question I'm asking myself Uncle Matthew But I have to go I do so There is something calling me Uncle Matthew—a bell in my ear father ■ brother and there's a ringing bell in my heart

VI

I SHALL NOW TELL YOU HOW IT CAME ABOUT that Marco Polo went to China with his uncle and father though he had no eye for a bargain or interest in courting foreign women or sense of horses

Now as you may know this was a great religious time. The Crusaders feeling shame that the Sepulchre of the Lord Jesus should be in Saracen hands had come with horse foot and artillery to Palestine to give tribute of arms to Him who had died for them on the Bitter Tree. And great feasts were performed and grand battles won. And kings became saints like Louis of France and saints became kings like Baldwin of Constantinople. Mighty wonders were seen and miracles performed so that people said. Now will be the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

And a great desire came on the Christian people to tell the truth of Christ to the strange and foreign peoples of the world. So that every day out of Jerusalem you would see friars hitting the road some of them to confront the

wizards of the Land of Darkness and some to argue theology with the old lamas of Tibet and some to convert the sunny Southern is lands where the young women do be letting down their hair and the men do be forgetting God for them And all over the world there was spreading a great rumor that the truth of all things was at last known

Even Kubla Khan had heard of it far off in China and he had charged the uncle and father of Marco with a message to the Pope of Rome Let the pope be sending some theologians to his court and they'd argue the matter out and if he was satisfied that this new religion was the True Religion then he'd turn Christian and tell his people to turn Christian too And let them be bringing back some of the Oil of the Lamp which burns in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and is a cure for all the ills in the world

And when they came to the City of Acre sure the pope was dead And they waited a long time but no new pope was chosen so they decided to go back because they had a good business there and they didn't want lose it And yet they knew there'd be trouble with the Grand Khan if they didn't br

back the news of the True Religion and people to argue it

I've been a long time trading says Nicolo and it's a queer thing but the more trading you do the less religion you have The arguing of religion would not come easy to me And I'd be up against experts I'm not the man for it says he How about you Matthew?

Oh sure they'd never listen to me Matthew laughs— me that's drank with them and deludhered their women and gambled until I left them nothing but the sweat of their brows I'd be a great one to preach religion to them Why man they'd laugh at me But I tell you what Nicolas There's a bishop in Negropont and I know where he lives and I know his house and everything What do you say Nicolas? We'll just throw a bag over his head and tie him on a horse Oh sure he'd give grand discourses to the Great Khan!

Have sense Matthew have sense You're always too rough always ready to end an argument with a knife or just lift what you want Have sense man you can't kidnap a bishop like you'd kidnap a woman

Well I don't see why not says Matthew It would be easier too because a woman will

scratch like a wildcat. But if you're set against it, I won't do it," he says. "Well, then, how about young Marco?"

"My sound man Matthew! my bully fellow! Sure you were never at a loss yet! Young Marco it is, sure. It is the elegant idea. There not a man born of woman better for the job."

Now all the Christian world had gone religious, and young Marco was no exception. It is not only the old that are religious. The young are too, but there's a difference. The religion of old men is reason and translation; the religion of the young is just a burning cloud. The tragedy of the Butter Tree is not a symbol to them, but a reality, and their souls are not of the spirit, but of the body, too.

And there are no half-way houses, no compromises, in a young man's creed. It's swallow all or be damned to you. It's believe or be

And thinking over the little girl in the Chinese garden, there had come into Marco's heart a thought past enduring. If the Golden Bells did not believe, then the Golden Bells was lost. She might have everything in this world, in this life, an empress, for a father, kings for suitors, a great poet, a minstrel, a wizard, for an entertainer, but once the little blue shadow left her body, she

was lost forever And the sight came to him of little Golden Bells going down the dim and lonely alleys of death and weeping weeping weeping Her eyes would be shot with panic and the little mouth twisted and the little flowery hands twitching at each other And it would be cold there for her who was so warm and it would be dark there for her who loved light and the Golden Bells of her voice would be lost in the whistling and clanging of the stars as they swung by in their orbits He to be in the great delight of paradise and she to be in the blue grey maze between the worlds—what tragedy!

Kings might bring her presents a husband might bring her happiness but if he could only bring her salvation! If he could only tell her of the Bitter Tree!

The body when you came to think of it mattered little All the beauty in the world could not endure more than its appointed span Helen was dust now and Deirdre nothing What had become of the beauty of Sémiramis Alexander's darling and Cleopatra who loved the great proconsul and Bathsheba for whom David of the Psalms fell from grace? And Balkis queen of Sheba with her apes ivory and peacocks Dust and ashes

dust and ashes! And Scheherizade was but a strange sad sound Beauty increased and waned like the moon A little shadow around the eyes a little crinkle in the neck the backs of the hands stiffening like parchment Dust and ashes dust and ashes!

But the little blue shadow would glow like an Easter morning

Or it would be a poor lonely unlit shadow in the cold gloom of the clinging worlds

Poor Colden Bells! Poor little weeping Colden Bells! If he could only tell her about the Bitter Tree!

And then what happens but his uncle Matthew claps him on the back

How would you like to go to China Marco Markcen says he and preach religion to the benighted people!

How did you know Uncle Matthew?

How did I know what?

That I wanted to go to China and preach religion to the—the people!

Well if that doesn't beat Braghier so Matthew Polo and Braghier beats the devil Tell me did you ever hear an old tune call Bundle and Go?

And so the three of them leave upon a

journey but at Layas where the king of Armenia had his castle they heard of the election of a new pope so they came back to Acre to get his instructions and blessing

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How did you know Uncle Matthew?

How did I know what?

That I wanted to go to China and preach religion to the—the people!

Well if that doesn't beat Binagher says Matthew Polo and Binagher beats the devil! Tell me did you ever hear an old tune called Bundle and Go! ?

And so the three of them leave upon their

ourney but at Lays where the King of Armenia had his castle they heard of the election of a new pope so they came back to Acton to get his instructions and blessing

VII

THE FATHER SAID A GRAND MASS FOR THEM AND at the gospel he enters the pulpit a burly figure of a man with sad eyes

The blessing of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost be with you and about you Amen

It is not to you Nicolo Polo that I wish to speak nor to you Matthew Polo for neither of you are my ambassadors to the Great Khan Merchant and sportsman I honor you and you have my blessing but you have no hopes of mine The dirty divisions of the world are between your eyes and glory said he It is only myself an old and sorrowful man and this child a young and hopeful one can understand old men having sight of visions and young men dreaming dreams

Now in the matter of converting the Great Khan and his numerous millions first let wisdom speak I have little hopes He wants to be argued into it you see Religion is not a matter of argument It is a wisdom that surpasses wisdom It drifts in men's souls as the foggy dew comes unbidden to the trees It is born

before our soul as the horned moon is born
before our eyes

And now my child you might say What
is the use of sending me to China if he knows
I cannot bring these millions into the fold?
My dear son there is the wisdom surpassing
wisdom A great and noble thought must not
die Things of the spirit we cannot reckon as
a husbandman reckons his crops There is a
folk on the marches of Europe and they are
ever going into battle and they always fall
Their results are nothing But their name and
their glory will endure forever

My dear son God has put wisdom in my
head and beauty into yours Wisdom is needed
for the governance of this world but beauty
is needed for its existence In arid deserts
there is no life Birds do not sing in the dark
of night Show me a waste country and I'll
show you a brutal people No faith can live
that is not beautiful

The beauty God has put in your heart
child you must always keep How much
I think of it I'll tell you I'm an old man now
an old and broken man and in a few years
I'll stand before my Master

What have you seen on my earth He'll
ask me you who followed St Peter!

Lord! Lord! I'll tell him I've seen mighty things I've seen the bridegroom leave his bride and the king his kingdom the huckster leave his booth and the reaper drop his hook that they might rescue Your Holy Sepulchre from pagan hands

And anything else? He'll ask

And I've seen a young man go out into the desert and over his head was a star

You may think you have failed child but remember that in the coming times your name and fame will awaken beauty and many's the traveler on the hard road will find his courage again and be thinking of Marco Polo And many's the young man will dream dreams and many's the old man will see visions and they reading the book by the gold candle light and many's the young girl will give you love and you dead for centuries But for this you must keep your dream

Now you'll think it's the queer pope I am to be telling you things like this instead of demanding converts But the wisdom that surpasses wisdom comes to you with the Anointing of the Oil I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago writes Saint Paul (whether in the body I cannot tell or

whether out of the body I cannot tell God knoweth)

How that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which is not lawful for a man to utter

Now you see there is a wisdom surpassing wisdom and it is out of this fount of wisdom I am drawing when I speak to you these words

Child I will not keep you any longer Only to say this and this is the chiefest thing never let your dream be taken from you Keep it unspotted from the world In darkness and in tribulation it will go with you as a friend but in wealth and power hold fast to it for then is danger Let not the mists of the world the gay diversions the little trifles draw you from glory

Remember!

Si oblitus fuero tui Jerusalem — If I forget thee O Jerusalem —

Oblivioni detur dextera mea — let my right hand forget her cunning —

Adhaereat lingua mea faucibus meis — if I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth —

Si non proposuero Jeru

n p'm

Georgia whose kings are born with the mark of an eagle on their right shoulder They passed through Persia where the magicians worship fire And they passed through the city of Saba where sleep the three magi who came to worship at Bethlehem and their names were Kaspar Balthasar and Melchior

And they passed through Canadi where great ruins are and robbers rove through the magical darkness And they passed northward of the Perilous Valley where the Devil's Head is in black stone and that is one of the nine entrances to hell and passed the Valley of the Cockdrills where there are serpents five fathoms in length and passed the Valley of Cruel Women who have precious stones in place of eyes

And they went through the Dismal Desert where no stream sang

And in the desert they passed the Trees of the Sun and Moon which speak with the voices of men And it was from the Speaking Tree that Alexander heard of his death And it was near there that he and Darius fought And they passed the *Arbre Sec* the Dry Tree which has a green bark on one side and white on the other and there are no trees within a

red miles of that tree and it sprung
 the staff of Adam
 and they passed through Balkh the Mother
 Cities And they passed through Taihan
 ere the great salt mountains are And they
 sed through Badashan where the moun-
 hs of the rubies are And they passed
 ough Kashmir whose women are very
 autiful and whose magicians weave the
 ongest spells in the world

And moons were born and died

And they came to Alamoot the fortress of
enex de Monte the Old Man of the Moun-
 ain the King of the Assassins the greatest
 izard of all time

Now this is the tale of the Old Man of the
 Mountain

Whenever within his dominions there was
 fine young horseman the Old Man would
 out a spell on him and draw him to the Castle
 of Alamoot and outside of the castle sleep
 would come on him And when he woke up
 he would be inside the cistle in the wonder-
 ful gardens And they d tell him he was dead
 and in paradise And paradise it would be for
 him what with the lovely women and the
 great playing on the flutes the birds singing
 and the sun shining the crystal rivers and

hundred miles of that tree and it is sprung from the staff of Adam

And they passed through Balkh the Mother of Cities And they passed through Tailan where the great salt mountains are And they passed through Badashan where the mountains of the rubies are And they passed through Kashmir whose women are very beautiful and whose magicians weave the strongest spells in the world

And moons were born and died

And they came to Alamoot the fortress of *Senex de Monte* the Old Man of the Mountain the King of the Assassins the greatest wizard of all time

Now this is the tale of the Old Man of the Mountain

Whenever within his dominions there was a fine young horseman the Old Man would put a spell on him and draw him to the Castle of Alamoot and outside of the castle sleep would come on him And when he woke up he would be inside the castle in the wonderful gardens And they'd tell him he was dead and in paradise And paradise it would be for him what with the lovely women and the great playing on the flutes the birds singing and the sun shining the crystal rivers and

IX

AND SO THEY WENT ON EASTWARD EVER EAST ward and the moons were born grew waned and died

They passed through Khotin where the divers bring up jade from the rivers white jade and black jade and green jade veined with gold They passed through Camul the shameful city whose women are fair and wanton whose men are cuckolds And they passed through the province of Chutingolos where are the mountains of the Salamanders They passed through the city of Campichu where there are more idols than men And they passed through the great city of Samarkand where the Green Stone is on which Timur's throne was set And moons were born and died

They passed through Tangut where the men will not carry the dead out through the door of a house but must break a hole in the wall And they passed through Kiakhta where there are snow white camels And they passed through the lands of Prester John

And now they were in the Fatar lands

There passed them lowing musk oxen There
passed them the wild asses of Mongolia There
passed them the barbarians with their great
tents on wheels There passed them the black
jowled savage idolaters There passed them
the pretty white faced women There passed
them huge abominable dogs

And they came to the town of Lob and a
new moon arose and they entered the Desert
of the Singing Sands

WHEREVER THEY WENT NOW WAS SAND AND A
 dull haze that made the sun look like a copper
 coin And a great silence fell on the caravan
 and nothing was heard but the crunch of the
 camels' pads and the tinkle of the camels'
 bells And no green thing was seen

And a great terror fell on the caravan so
 that one night a third o' the caravan deserted
 The rest went on in silence under the dull
 sun And now they came across a village of
 white skeletons grinning in the silent sand
 And at night there was nothing heard not
 even the howling of a dog And others of the

terror saying Were we ever any place where green was where birds sang or there was sweet water? Or maybe we are dead Or maybe this was all our life and the pleasant towns and the lamplight in the villages and the apricots in the garden and our wives and children maybe they were all a dream that we woke in the middle of Let us lie down and sleep that we may dream again

But Marco Polo would not let them lie down for to lie down was death But he drove them onward And again they complained

Surely God never saw this place that He left it so terrible Surely He was never here He was never here

And now that their minds were pitched to the height of madness the warlocks of the desert took shape and jeered at them and the white sheeted ghosts flitted alongside of them and the goblins of the Gobi harried them from behind And the sun was like dull copper through the haze and the moon like a guttering candle and stars there were none

And when the moon was at its full they came to the Hill of the Bell And through the night the Bell went gongh gongh gongh until they could feel it in every fiber of their bodies and their skin itched with it The

would stop their ears But they would hear it in the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet *Gongh gongh gongh*

And when they left the Hill of the Bell there were only six of the caravan left and a multitude of white sheeted ghosts And the caravan plodded onward dully And now the warlocks of the desert plied another cruelty Afar off they would put a screaming of a lake and the travelers would press on gladly crying There is water! water! God lives! God lives! But there was only sand And now it would be a green vision and they would cry

We have come to the edge of the desert After the long night dawn God lives! God lives! But there would be only sand sand And now it would be a city of shining domes in the distance And they would nudge one another and creak There are men there brother secure streets and merchants in their booths people to talk with and water for our poor throats } But there would be only sand sand sand } And they would cry like children

God is dead! Haven't you heard Don't you know God is dead in His heaven and the warlocks are loosed on the land!

And on the last day of the moon they were

all but in sight of the desert's edge though they didn't know. And the goblins and the warlocks took counsel for they were now afraid Marco and his few people would escape. They gathered together and they read the runes of the Flowing Sand.

And suddenly the camels rushed screaming into the desert with sudden panic and a burning wind came and the sands rose and the desert heeled like a ship and the day became night.

And young Marco Polo could stand no more. That was the end, the end of him, the end of the world, the end of everything. There was red darkness everywhere and he could see nobody. O my Lord Jesus! he cried. O little Golden Bells! The wind boomed like an organ. The sand screamed. O my Lord Jesus! O little Golden Bells! And the voices of his father and uncle were like the crying of birds. Where's the lad, Mark? Where's our lad? Mark Mark, where's the lad of our heart? But they couldn't find each other. The sands buffeted them like shuttlecocks. The sands snarled like a dog. The sands hammered like drums. Oh Golden Bells!

MESSER MARCO IOLO

little Golden Bells! O my Lord Jesus must
it end here?

And the fight went out of him and a big
sob broke in him and he lay down to die

I SHALL NOW TELL YOU OF GOLDEN BELLS
AND HER IN THE CHINESE GARDEN

XII

I WOULD HAVE YOU NOW SEE HER AS I SEE HER standing before Li Po the great poet in her green costume And Li Po big fat with sad eyes and a twisted mouth uncomfortable as he damned The sun shone in the garden the butterflies the red and black and golden butterflies fluted from blossom to blossom And the bees droned And on the banks of the green lake the kingfisher tunneled his wee house and the wind shook the blossoms of the apple trees And I Li Po sat on the marble slab and was very uncomfortable And in a dark bower was Yunnan the migratory brooding like an owl And Golden Bells would be fore Li Po and there were hurt tears in her eyes

Did my father or I ever do anything to you Li Po that you should make a song such as they sing in the market place

What song

The Song of the Cock too

I don't remember

I'll remind you Li Po I there alighted on the balcony of the King of Anram the song

And I go down to the drinking booths^{~~~~} and the passion of drinking comes on me—a fury against myself and a fury against the world. And the folk do be following me to see will I let drop one gem of verse that they can tell their grandchildren they heard from the lips of Li Po. And when my heart is high with the drinking I take a lute from a traveling poet and not knowing what I'm saying I compose the song. Out of fallow sorrow bloom the little songs. You mustn't be hard on an old man wee C olden Bells and be thinking long for his dead friends.

Ah poor Li Po she said and she had grown all soft again. Is it so terrible to be old?

Now you ask me a question C olden Bells and I'll give you an answer. Besides it's part of my duties to teach you wisdom. Now it is not a terrible thing at all at all to be old. I see the young folk start out in life and before them there's the showers of April there's wind and heat and thunder and lightning. But I'm in warm brown October and all of it's gone by me. And in a little while I'll sleep and it is I need it C old help me! The old don't sleep much wee C olden Bells so it is a comfort to look forward to one's rest after the

XIII

AND NOW WHEN MARCO POLO WAS RESTED AND had recovered they brought him from the Convent of the Red Monks to where the Khan was in the city of Chandu. Now there were two palaces in Chandu: there was the winter palace which was of marble and the summer palace which was of gilt cane. Around these palaces there was built a wall sixteen miles in compass and inside of it was a park of fountains and rivers and brooks with the speckled trout in them and meadows with the lark at her ease in the grass and trees of all varieties where the little birds do be building and none to grudge them a home. And all the wild animals were abundant: the timid hare and the wild deer and the wee croaking frogs long legged colts by their white mothers and little dogs tumbling over themselves with the sport of spring. Brown bees among the clover strawberries in profusion: trees would delight your eyes and brown cows and black cows and spotted molies under the great leaves of them and lambs would be snowy of fleece. All the flowers of the world were there: the para

dise of wild things it wis the park of Kubla Khan

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan . quoted young Randall

A stately pleasure dome decree
Where Alph the sacred river ran
Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense bearing tree
And here were forests ancient as the hills
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery

Whose poem is that poem Brian Oge?

It is a poem of Coleridge s *Malachi*

I thought it was maybe a poem of Colquitto Dall McCracken of Skye that one of you lads had put English on It is a poem of the head you ken and Colquitto being a dark man could only see with the eye s ghost But it hasn t the warmth the life of the work of Blind Colquitto Brian Oge do you mind the poem Angus More Campbell of Rathlin wrote to Colquitto Dall?

Is aoi bhinn duid Colquitto Dall . I remembered It is happy for thee blind Colquitto who dost not see much of women If thou wert to see what we see thou wouldst

be tormented even as I am My sorrow O God that I was not stricken blind before I saw her amber twisted hair!

That's it that's it Brian Oge But this is not the place to be talking of poetry There is no poetry in this story

I will now tell you of Marco Polo and him entering the presence of the Great Khan

XIV

AND MARCO POLO WAS BROUGHT INTO THE presence And among all assembled there you could hear a pin drop

At the north end of the great hall sat the Khan himself and Marco Polo nearly dropped with surprise for where he expected a great magnificent figure of a man with majesty shining from his eyes he saw only a pleasant bearded man not quarter so well dressed as the meanest servant on the room and a fine welcoming smile in his face His throne was elevated so that his feet were on the level of the heads of the kinsmen of the Blood Royal beneath him and they in silk and ermine and fine brocades and jewels And beneath these were the barons and dukes and knights And beneath these were the captains of the fighting men three thousand and three And beneath these were the musicians and the sorcerers And behind Kubla Khan very big very erect stood his three great servants the Keeper of the Hunting Leopards the Keeper of the Speaking Drums and the Keeper of the Khan's Swords

And beside Kubla Khan on a little throne
sat Golden Bells And it was the sight
of her more than the sight of the great assem-
bly that dumbed the words in his mouth And
Kubla was smiling at him and she was smil-
ing too

And Kubla saw there was something wrong
with him that there was embarrassment on
him and he rose from his throne

There is welcome for you here Marco
Polo and no enmity There is interest in and
eagerness for your message There is none
here will criticize you or make it hard for you
Let there be no shame on you in speaking be-
fore so many people Say what you have to say
as if there were nobody here if that will help
you barring myself and the lady daughter
beside me

O Emperor the words came back to
Marco Polo and ye great prince dukes
and marquises counts knights and bar-
gesses and people of all degrees who desire
the light of the world grace be to you and
peace from God our Father and from
Lord Jesus Christ!

The message I have to give you is to
give in the words of Him who sent me
sage it is

Beati pauperes spiritu —Blessed are the poor in spirit

Quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum —for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Beati mites —Blessed are the meek

And Marco Polo went on and quoted for them the words that were spoken on the Mount in Galilee And they listened to him with great civility and attention And little Golden Bells leaned forward with her chin on her hands and Kubla leaned back in his throne with his eyes half closed

But I say unto you that ye resist not evil but whoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also And at this the Great Khan looked up puzzled and a movement went through the fighting men in the hall But wee Golden Bells never budged a minute and Marco Polo went on

Et factum est cum consummasset Jesus verba haec — And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings the people were astonished at his doctrine

I shall now tell you of the life and death of the Lord Jesus

He told them of the birth in Bethlehem and of the teaching on the hills and the poets nodded their heads and he told them of the

cleansing of the lepers and of the casting out of devils and the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the magicians wondered and he told them of the betrayal by Judas with a kiss and the captains at arms shuffled in their seats and he told them of the scourging and of the crowning with thorns and the Great Khan snicked his dagger in and out of the sheath And a mist of tears came into the eyes of Golden Bells

And he told them of the crucifixion between two thieves and a great oath ripped from the beard of Kubla Khan and the silver tears ran from the eyes of Golden Bells

And on the third day He arose from the dead

And a great shout came from the throat of Kubla Khan and he stood up

He arose from among the dead men I'll warrant He showed himself to the Roman Pilate in all His power and majesty—

No said Marco Polo

Then He showed himself to the thousands who had seen him die upon the gallows tree!

No said Marco Polo

Who saw Him then?

His twelve Apostles and they in a little room!

And Kubla Khan sat down suddenly and said no more. There was a moment's murmur of wonder among the assembly and then silence. And Marco's heart fell. And he was aware of two things of the great politeness of the Chinese people and of Golden Bell's pitying eyes.

XV

WHEN KUBLA KHAN DISMISSED THE ASSEMBLY and he took Marco Polo into a sitting room and Golden Bells came with them

And what did you think sir of what I said? And can you not see sir the truth that is in me?

Well now laddie said the Great Khan when we come to examine this sermon you quoted to us what is there in it but the rule of the righteous man? We've had a great thinker and pious man of our own Confucius I'm not a reading man says he but I've got an idea says he that there isn't a thing you said but is embraced in the Annals. And if it isn't it'll be in the teachings of the Lord Buddha

Ah but sir Marco Polo said you'll have to admit that He of whom I speak was the true God made man

Now laddie remember I'm an old man set in my head and my ways and I've been used to one belief so long it would be like changing. So don't press me now don't me I ask you

going further. Sure you'd be up against the sorcerers of the world. They'd ask you for a sign and you'd have no sign and they'd have signs in abundance. I wouldn't think of letting you go against them. Fair play's a jewel and you wouldn't have a chance. There's the Red Pope from Tibet and there's the Black Magician from Korea and a hundred minor ones and the Warlock of the North from the Islands of Ice who governs the hail and the snow. Child, I wouldn't let you get into the same ring with them. They'd ruin you.

But sir, wasn't it a great miracle of the Lord's my rescue in the Gobi Desert?

A miracle of the Lord's! A miracle of Golden Bells here. It was her magician saw you and she had the message put on the drums and the desert patrols went to seek you. It was herself here, wee Golden Bells. And Golden Bells' mouth gave a smile of shame that his thought should be broken in his mind.

A long way I'm after coming, said Marco Polo, and when I set out my heart was high.

Now don't be taking it too hard, says the Khan kindly. Sure there's a power of good you can be doing here. Maybe you can do something with Li Po, says he. I'd like fine

for you to try The man is worrying the life
 out of me with his drinking I never know
 when he goes out whether he'll come back all
 right or feet foremost on a door For he's got
 the bitter tongue when the drink's in him
 and Chum could ill afford to lose him And
 there are some of my captains and the tune
 they're always piping is War! War! War!
 And let's show up this Alexander who said he
 conquered the world And I in past the age
 when you make war for dominion So let you
 be helping me out with them Marco Polo

But Marco Polo knew this was only meant
 in kindness and his heart was broken

Ah wee lady — he turned to Golden
 Bells — wee lady wee lady why didn't you
 let me die in the desert? Why didn't I die?

And why should you die Marco Polo?
 Her low sweet voice rang in the heart of him

Didn't you come here to give your message?
 And to make converts? And didn't I hear your
 message? And am not I your convert Marco
 Polo?

XVI

AND NOW THE PLACE OF LI LO WAS USURPED
and gone *Sanang* with his magic glass and in
the jasmine garden by the Lake of Cranes
Marco Polo sat and instructed Golden
Bells

XVII

AND HE TOLD OF THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
when savage Herod reigned and of the Jew
ish maid and her child sleeping beneath the
shadow of the great Sphinx while the shades
of the old Afric gods looked on in reverence,
Amenah and Thoth and the moon horned
Io Isis and Osiris And the painted kings
knelt in their pyramids and out of the slug
gish Nile came the strange aquatic popula
tion the torpid crocodiles and monstrous
water lizards and the great hippopotamus lum
bered to bow before the little Lord of all
things

And he told her how Satan had tempted
Him on the lonely black crags

But you are not listening little Golden
Bell—

Indeed I am listening Marco Polo Yes
indeed I am I love to hear your voice Marco
Polo You are so earnest Marco Polo there
is such a light in your eyes Listen Marco
Polo Li Po once wrote a poem White Glean
the Culls and it is the poem by which he is
best known and every time I hear it there is

an echo in my heart But Marco Polo I never listened to Li Po's song so eagerly as I am listening to your voice

But you are not taking it in little Golden Bells

It is very hard to take in Marco Polo It happened so long ago It is hard to think of a tragedy in a strange country and we in this garden on the second moon of spring And it was so very long ago Do you hear the bees Marco Polo—the bees among the almond blossoms? And see the blue heron by the lotus flowers? And do you see the little tortoise Marco Polo and he sunning himself on a leaf? If I throw a pebble Marco Polo he will dive and he is such a clumsy diver Marco Polo!

But you must listen Golden Bells and believe me

I do believe Marco Polo I honestly do Don't you know I believe you? Anything you say Marco Polo I believe You wouldn't be coming all the way over the world to be telling me a lie Of course I believe

And doesn't it make you happy Golden Bells?

Once I was unhappy Marco Polo I used to sit here and on my lute I used to play the Song of the Willow Branches which is the

MESSIR MARCO POLO

saddest song in the world Under the moon I
 used to be lonely and the droning of the bees
 meant nothing to me and now it is a sweet
 brave song I cannot play Willow Branches
 any more so alien is sadness to me And the
 moon smiles I am very happy Marco Polo
 It is the True Religion little Golden
 Bells that makes you happy
 Is it Marco Polo? Is it? It must be I sup-
 pose I don't know what it is but I am very
 happy

XVIII

AND HE TOLD HER OF PAUL WHO HAD SEEN A vision and gone preaching through the world who was persecuted who was shipwrecked who was bitten by a viper and who survived everything that he might preach the Lord Jesus He was a fierce ragged man with burning eyes And he told her of Paul's instructions to women

You do not look at me when you speak Marco Polo Only your voice comes to me not your eyes Is it because of Paul?

And Marco Polo felt great trouble on him because he could not explain But Golden Bells went on

There is little in your faith about women Marco Polo Is it a faith only for men then? Is it against women? Must the young men not look at the young women?

No Golden Bells the young men must not look too much on the young women

But that is very foolish Marco Polo Is it wrong to see the beauty of the almond blossoms wrong to taste the scented wind? Is it wrong to watch the kingfisher seeking his

nest Is it wrong to watch the moon the stars?
All these are very beautiful Marco Polo so
beautiful as to make me cry Is it wrong to
watch them?

It is not wrong Golden Bells The glory
of God is in the beauty of his handicraft

Li Po is old and wise and a great poet
Marco Polo and Li Po says there is beauty in
a running horse and beauty in a running
stream but there is no beauty like the beauty
of a young woman and she letting down her
hair God made the beauty of women too
Marco Polo as well as the beauty of the stars
Won't you please explain to me Marco Polo
Why should Li Po say one thing and Saint
Paul another?

But Golden Bells Saint Paul is inspired
of God

But Li Po is inspired of God too Marco
Polo You mustn't be thinking little of Li Po
He is fat and old and drunken but when he
sings Marco Polo it is the song of the wander-
ing stars But why must not the young men
look at the young women Marco Polo? Why
must they not look with their eyes?

It will be hard for me to tell you Golden
Bells—

Look at me now Marco Polo I sit up

your eyes and look into my eyes Is there evil in me Marco Polo that your eyes should avoid me as the fox avoids the dog? Or maybe I am not beautiful Maybe they told me wrong because I was a king's daughter and they would not have me think little of myself Maybe I am not beautiful Marco Polo maybe I hurt your eyes—

Ah Golden Bells the little horned moon is not more beautiful

Then why must not the young men look at the young women Marco Polo? You are here to instruct me Won't you tell me why?

Maybe—maybe—maybe it is for fear of sin Golden Bells

Sin? Sin! Why should there be sin? I know sin Marco Polo They have warned me against it since I crept upon the floor There are two sins There is meanness Marco Polo and there is cruelty and those are the only sins I know your heart Marco Polo there is no meanness there You would not have come here were you mean The mean do not travel afar for other people And cruelty! Surely you would not be cruel to me Marco Polo You would not be cruel to anybody dear Marco Polo You would not be cruel to me?

MESSIER MARCO POLO

Cruel to you little Golden Bells! How
could I be cruel to you?
But the sin Marco Polo?
I don't know Golden Bells I don't
know

XIX

AND ONE DUSK THE MOON ROSE OVER THE Chinese garden and Marco Polo finished telling her of what John saw on Patmos and he an old man

Veni Domine Jesu

Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum omnibus vobis Amen!

It is very difficult Marco Polo I don't quite understand

I don't quite understand myself Golden Bells But that is all I can tell you But you will understand more he said My mission is finished now and I will go back I will stop at the court of Prester John and he will send a bishop surely or some great cardinal to baptize you and to teach you the rest

You will go back? A great pain stabbed her I never thought somehow of you as going back

I have come on a mission Golden Bells and I must go back

There is a woman maybe in Venice— And she turned her head away from him and from the moon

I would not have you thinking of Golden Bells. There is none in Venice. I have a duty from me. And if the queen of the world were there and she pledged to me I would never look at her and I after knowing Golden Bells!

Is it money Marco Polo? she whispers in the dusk. It is maybe your uncle and father are pressing you to return. Let you worry then for my father the Great Khan settle with them too. There is not a horse all Tartary that your uncle cannot have a woman either. And your father can have the jewels of the treasury and all the silver too even the sword with which my father conquered China. My father will give him all I ask. Only let you not be leaving this in the garden.

Dear Golden Bells it isn't that but I came here for converts—

Oh Marco Polo listen! There is a sect of Kai fung fu and they are an evil folk and cowardly folk and my father abhors them. I shall ask my father to send captains of war and fighting men to convert them to your faith. Marco Polo or lop off their heads. And we can send a few hundreds to the Pope in Rome and he will never know how they

converted and he will be satisfied. Only let you not be going away from me in my moonlit garden. You will only be turning to trade Marco Polo and marrying a woman. Let you stay here in the moonlit garden!

Ah little Golden Bells, there is no place in the world like your moonlit garden. There is no place I'd be liefer than in the moonlit garden. But little Golden Bells, I set out in life to preach the Lord Jesus crucified. It was for that I came to China.

Let you not be fooling yourself, young Marco Polo. Let you not always be ascribing to God the things that are mine. You did not come to preach to China; you came to see me and your mind stirred up with the story the sea captain told of me playing Willow Branches by the Lake of Cranes. O Marco Polo, before you came there were the moon and the sun and the stars, and I was lonely. O Marco Polo, she cried, you wouldn't go, you couldn't go! What would you be doing in cold Venice, far from the warm moonlit garden?

Sure, I'll be lonely too, little Golden Bells, a white monk in a monastery, praying for you.

But I don't want to be prayed for, Marco

Polo She stamped her foot I want to be loved And there you have it out of me and a great shame to you that you made me say it me that was desired of many and would have no man until you came And surely it is the harsh God you have made out of The kindly Person you spoke of And tis not He would have my heart broken and you turning your self into a crabbed monk And how do you know your preaching will convert any? Tis few you converted here Ah I'm sorry dear Marco Polo I shouldn't have said it but there is despair on me and I am afraid of losing you

Is true though I have nothing nobody to show

You have me Am not I converted? Am not I a Christian Marco Polo let me tell you something I said to my father I wanted to marry you and I asked him if he would give you a province to govern and he said Sure and welcome And I asked him for Yangchan the pleasantest city in all China And he said Sure and welcome Golden Bells And I told him we would be married and go there and govern his people kindly And you wouldn't shame me before my own father and all the people of China You couldn't do that Marco

Polo Marco Polo —she came toward him
her eyes shining — let you stay!

Christ protect me! Christ guide me! Christ
before me!

Marco Polo!

Christ behind me!

The moon Marco Polo and me Golden
Bells and the nightingale in the apple tree!

Christ on my right hand! Christ on my
left! Christ below me!

Her arms were around his neck her cheek
came close to his

Marco Polo! Marco Polo!

Christ above me!

My Marco Polo!

O God! Golden Bells!

And he put his arms around her and his
cheeks to hers and all the battle and the dis-
appointment and the fear and the strangeness
went out of him And down by the lake the
wee frogs chirruped and in the apple tree the
nightingale never ceased from singing And
they stayed there shoulder to shoulder and
cheek to cheek And the moon rose higher
And it seemed only a moment they were there
until they heard the voice of Li Lo in the
garden

Are you there?

finest of women but a pleasant thing like a long putt sunk or the first salmon of the year caught like a trout or the ball through the goal before the whistle blows? And there's many a well filled belly over a hungry soul

But a story is how destiny is interwoven the fine and gallant and the tragic points of life And you mustn't look at them with the eyes of the body but you must feel with the antennæ of your being Now if you were to look at the Lord Jesus with physical eyes what would it be but a kindly crazy man and He coming to a hard and bitter end Look at it simply and what was the story of Troy but a dirty row over a woman?

But often times the stories with the endings that grocer's daughters do not be liking are the stories that are worth while And the worth while stories do be lasting Never clip a story half ways because the Widow Robinson doesn't like to have her mind disturbed and she warming her breadth at the fire The Widow Robinson may have a white coin to buy a book with and think you're the grand author entirely and you pleasing her But the Lord God who gave you the stories will know you for a louse

I call to your mind the stories of the great

English writer—the plays of the Prince of Denmark and the poor blind king on the cliff and the Scottish chieftain and his terrible wife The Widow Robinson will not like those stories and she will be keeping her white coin But those stories will endure forever

I will now tell you of Marco Polo and him leaving China

YOU MUST SEE HIM NOW AS HE WAS SEVENTEEN years after he had come to China and fourteen years after his wife Little Golden Bells had died a lean figure of a man with his hair streaked with gray a lean hard face on him and savage eyes and all the body of him steel and whalebone from riding on the Great Khin's business and riding fast and furious so that he might sleep and forget but forgetting never came to him. You might think he was a harsh man from his face and eyes but he was the straight man in administering justice and he had the soft heart for the poor—the heart of Golden Bells. He was easily moved to anger but the fine Chinese people never minded him knowing he was a suffering man. Though never a word of Golden Bells came from his mouth barring maybe that line of Dante's the saddest line in the world and that he used to repeat to himself and no one there.

la t'ella pers ma

C'è mi su t'la *che mi su tolti* who was
 taken from me Taken? Taken from me!
 tolti

And sometimes a look would come over his face as if he were listening for a voice to speak—listening listening and then a wee harsh laugh would come from him very heartbreaking to hear and whatever was in his hand papers or a riding whip he would pitch down and walk away

He had just come in from the borders of the Arctic lands from giving the Khan's orders to the squat hairy tribes who live by the icy shores and had come to the garden by the Lake of Cranes the garden where the Golden Bells of singing and laughter were dumb this armful of years and he was alone and the listening look was on his face when there came Kubla and Li Po and the old magician

Now Kubla was very old so old he could hardly walk and very frail and Li Po was very old too and gray in the face and sadder in the eyes than ever and the magician's white beard had grown to his knees but there was no more humor in his eyes And Marco Iolo helped the old Khan to sit down

Oh sir why did you come to me? Sure I was going to you the moment I had changed my riding clothes Sir you should have stayed in your bed

There was something on my mind Marco

and the old do be thinking long to get
off their mind

What can I do sir?

Marco my child you mustn't take
I say amiss But I want you to be going back
to be going back to Venice

Sir what have I done to dissatisfy you? I
all my embassies have I been weak to the
strong or bullying toward the weak? Does a
oppressed man complain of injustice does
merchant complain of being cheated or
woman say she was wronged?

Now Marco of my heart didn't I say no
to be taking it amiss? Is there any one else
to me nor you or is it likely I'd be listen
to stories brought against you? It's just this
I'm an old and tired man Marco Beag and
in a week or a moon at most I'm due to die so
the *Sanang* tells me Don't be sorry son Be
glad for me Life has been a wee bit too long

And now son dear I want to tell you
You've been closer to me than my own sons
and you've been the dear lad And there's not
one man in all China can say you did a harsh
or an unjust thing but my dear son it's just
the way of people there's a power of hard feel
ing against you in this land you being a
stranger and having stood so high

So when I'm dead dear son there's many would do you an injury and treat you badly aye in our family itself though they smile on you now Let you be going now Marco I'll miss you to close my eyes for me but my heart will be lighter It will so I couldn't sleep easy and you ill treated in this land of mine You ask him too Li Po

Ah sir Marco laughed — and Li Po what is ill treatment to me? Sorrow's my blood brother What I've suffered! Do you think I could suffer more?

I know Marco I know

Don't you think I suffer now sir? Fourteen years she's dead now the wee one who lay by my side in sleep And never a word and never a sign In the house where we were married I can see the pool and the willows and the hibiscus but there is never a token of her he broke out The leaves of trees cover the pavilion the hair of the musicians is silver and dust is on the blue and white tiles And she never comes to comfort me I can't sleep with waiting The stars never seem to wane and the hoar frost comes on the grass and I'm always waiting Christ! why should I go back? I've forgotten Venice I've even forgotten my God for her!

MESSER MARCO POLO

sign from Golden Bells will you leave China?

If there is a sign from her I ll leave China”
said Marco Polo

And it was dusk in the Garden by the Lake
of Cranes

XVII

THE SANANG CAME OVER TO MARCO POLO

Give me the black tress that s over your heart

And Marco Polo undid his coat and his undercoat and his fine sark and took out the perfumed hair and gave it to the *Sanang*

Let you sing a little song *Li Po* the magician said the way she ll be hearing and come I have part of her here and let you put in the garden the atmosphere she loved And *Li Po* took his lute and plucked gently at the strings

The swish of your silken skirt is continued
he sang

And the grass grows through the broken hearth
stone

And your room that was so warm and sweet is
cold and mouldy

But he the beloved of your heart clings on

A fallen leaf in the clink of a door

In the clunk of a closed door!

And it was dusk in the garden and the voice of *Li Po* broke and his lute stilled and

the old Emperor breathed his aged gentle breathing and the Sanang said his secret terrible formula and Marco Polo was tense as a hunting dog

And suddenly at the end of the garden in the perfumed Asian dusk there was a beam like moonlight and into the soft ray of it stood little Golden Bells with her wee warm face and her wee warm hands and her hair dark as a cloud and her eyes pleading pleading

Go now Marco Polo please go! Her lips made the words but no sound came to him

Oh Golden Bells Golden Bells! he rushed forward but the moonlight of no moon faded and there was nothing and he dropped on his knees sobbing in the dusk by the Lake of Cranes

XXIII

AND AFTER A WHILE HE GOT UP FROM HIS knees and set his teeth on his sobbing and threw his head back and squared his shoulders and notched his belt and faced the three ancient men

Well he said that & that

He went over and knelt and kissed the Khan's hand

You'll be seeing her soon sir you'll be telling her everything

Yes son I'll tell her

Then he patted the *Sanang* on the shoulder and 'Thanks!' said he simply and he took Li Po's hand in both his and they looked at each other for a moment and no words came to either

Well he says at length I'll be hitting the road then I'll not say good by to any of you I'll be seeing you all pretty soon again There's a war on between Venice and the Genoese and where that's hottest you'll find me and the quicker my end the better I'll be pleased But it would be like my luck he said bitterly not to be killed but to be taken pr

MESSER MARCO POLO

For and to end my life in some lousy jail Oh
well we'll hope for the best He laughed
So—so long!

And the four of them looked at one another trying to smile and great grief on them

China will miss you my son said old
Kubla

It's nothing to how I'll be missing China
said Marco Polo Venice! It's only a sound
to me I'll be an exile in the city of my birth
But what's the use of complaining? If it's go
it's go But it'll be funny said he My body
will be there but my heart and mind will be
in China There'll be a gray eye always turn-
ing to China and it will never see China

Queer! All the voices and all the instru-
ments in Saint Mark's and in my ears the
little drums of China All the sunlight
will be glinting on the Grand Canal but the
little rain of China—the little rain of China
will be falling in my heart

Ah well if it's go it's go I'd better be
hitting the road So I'll say good by for
the present and

Oh my God Almighty!

THE END

OF

MESSER MARCO POLO

A NOTE ABOUT PENGUIN BOOKS INC AND ITS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

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 stous clever fellow and yet willing, nevertheless to
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 who regains for a period his lost youth and courts a
 triety of the world's fairest women—from Helen to
 his Satan herself Where demanded H. L. Menck-
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 purely a masterpiece? It will I believe, long outlast
 today

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 ctorate this delightful tale of the passions of Southern
 California is replete with wisdom, tenderness and au-
 thentic belly laughs To have so profound a story, said
 William Rose Benet and made their story almost hy-
 percritically funny is no slight achievement

THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER, by Carson McCullers

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 women and it is too much to say

Book is a strange mating of Rabelais and the
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THE SUMMING UP

by H. Somerset Ma

The manifesto of an artist, an autobiography of a
an account of the education of a writer (of the disc
and training that went into such eminently re
books as *Of Humors* and *The Moon and*
penance)—it recalls in its urbanity and worldly w
the great prose writers of the Eighteenth Century
longs to the tradition of Rousseau, Montaigne, Ne
and Henry Adams

ORLANDO

by Virginia L.

The story of a Wild Goose chase—through three
turies—after the classical bird of poetry. This fic
biography that starts with its hero in Elizabethan
and finishes up with a heroine in 1938 is also a h
ingly evocative picture of English history

THE UNVANQUISHED

by Howard

The story of the first disastrous eight months of the R
lution provides one of the most convincing portraits
George Washington in fiction. Carl Van Doren wh
reading *The Unvanquished* is the next best thing
having been on the scene at the time

WINESBURG, OHIO

by Sherwood Ande

This famous collection of short stories, according
Ernest Boyd, combines to make a picture of Amer
life which carries the inescapable conviction of re
In their unpremeditated art they have a power

suggestion and revelation which we are accustomed to find in the great Russians

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

by E. M. Forster

Contemporary critics have called Forster the finest writer now using the English tongue and this absorbing novel has been hailed as his masterpiece. In his recent study of Forster Lionel Trilling says: "Great as the problem of India is, Forster's book is not about India alone; it is about all of human life."

THE LOVELY LADY

by D. H. Lawrence

This volume of short stories includes the last fiction written by D. H. Lawrence, one of the most widely discussed of modern authors. *The Rocking Horse Winner* is an uncanny study of childhood. *Rudon's Roof* gives the character of a man afraid of women. *Mother and Daughter* concerns the conflict between parent and child. The stories are in Lawrence's most mellow vein and several of them rank among his shorter masterpieces.

MANHATTAN TRANSFER

by John Dos Passos

This novel presents a cross section of New York up to and including the hipster era. It is a literal slice of life, knitting through the facades of skyscraper and brownstone house to reveal the New Yorker in all his permutations.

READ AND WINE

by Ignazio Silone

Silone's great novel of the Italian underground just before the Ethiopian war. As Edmund Wilson says in the *New Yorker*: "It has something in common with the best of our modern novels like *Dead Souls* and *Huckleberry Finn*."

